NAQCC News

Apr 7, 2012	NAQCC Web Site	Issue #164

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1. APRIL SPRINT: Didn't we just finish a sprint? Yes, but because of the way our sprint schedule works to accomodate our members, there was a short interval between sprints this time. For those of you not familiar with our schedule and the reasoning behind it, I'll explain. When we first started our NAQCC sprints back in October 2004, it was our intention to have them on different weeks and different weekdays each month. That got too complicated and interfered with other clubs' weekeday events, so a couple months later we decided on an alternating 2nd Tuesday - 3rd Wednesday evening schedule. The purpose of all this juggling was to allow all our members to take part in at least some of our sprints. For example, some members may have choir practice every Wednesday evening, but they can still participate in our Tuesday sprints. Others may have a computer club meeting or a tennis match every Tuesday evening, but they can participate in our Wednesday sprints. Then of course those who work evenings every second week of a month can partake of our third week sprints. I'm sure you get the picture behind what may at first glance seem chaos or madness. It seems to have worked out very well as I believe we are one of the few, perhaps the only weekday evening sprint that has had over 100 logs submitted for 23 of our last 24 sprints, several of those over 120 logs up to a record of 135.

Our sprint upcoming this Tuesday evening (April 10) local time - 0130Z to 0330Z Wednesday the 11th will be our 90th regular monthly sprint. Wouldn't it be nice if we could break our record of 135 logs (August 2010) this month. We came close in March but fell a few logs short.

As we always remind you, it is not necessary to be a top notch contester to enjoy our sprints. In fact it is somewhat the opposite. Our sprints encourage those new to contesting, even those who have never been in a single contest, to participate. Our low-key, slow speed, friendly sprints are a great way to get one's feet wet in the fascinating world of ham-radio contesting. Many who made our sprints their entryway into contesting have now become very good

contesters, while those who have no desire to pursue contesting further still enjoy our little friendly get-togethers each month as their only contests.

If you are new to the sprints, please read the complete sprint rules carefully so you'll know exactly what we need in the form of logs. While it is not necessary to use a computer program for your sprint logging, if you do use our recommended GenLog program correctly, then submit via the autologger, it will take you the least amount of time to compile and submit your log and report. Just a few minutes in most cases. If you have any doubts about using GenLog, check out our illustrated tutorial on using the program.

I've also created a 'check list' or 'tutorial' on how you can be almost guaranteed to have a GOLDEN LOG. This supplements the info in the Sprint General Rules. Check it out here if you haven't been getting a GOLDEN LOG lately. Maybe you'll see where you've been going wrong.

There is a plain text file (one for each continental USA time zone) of upcoming sprint dates for the rest of 2012. See the 'Print a Schedule' page in the 'Contests/Sprints' section of the web site. Print it out and post it somwhere prominently so you won't miss a single one of our sprints.

Read and understand the full general sprint rules and any specific rules for this month's sprint here.

2. MARCH CHALLENGE RESULTS: Once again our newsletter comes out before the submission deadline for your March challenge results. However, so far the theme of words relating to the end of Maritime CW seems to have been a popular one. Because of the number of words and the particular letters included in those words, it was perhaps a bit more challenging than usual. A few members, myself included, came right down to the wire to complete the challenge. So far we have reports in from K9OSC W9UX K1YAN VE3FUJ KD0V PA5LR K3WWP W2JEK and K1IEE who completed the challenge and from N8XMS PA7PYR and NU7T who participated but came up a couple of words short of completion. Of course all who participated get (logically) a participation point. Those who completed the challenge get in addition a beautiful certificate.

We had hoped that someone would add a bonus "word" being the call sign of a maritime coastal station that was a favorite of theirs or one at which they worked as an operator, but so far that hasn't come to pass. W2JEK did mention his father worked at WCC, WRG, and WSO, the latter two in Marion, MA.

Full Challenge results can always be found here.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS:

- We've had a bit of a shake-up in our NAQCC QRS Nets again. Dan AF4LB had to resign as NCS of the NQN and ECN for non-ham-radio personal reasons. He is going to temporarily keep the Net Manager job though. From now on, Craig N4PLK will be the NCS for the NQN. For the time being (hopefully longer), Milt K4OSO will be the ECN NCS. All of this just develolped in the last couple days so we are in transition right now.

It would be nice to have some more standby NCS around, so if you would like to be put on a standby list in case we have other changes, email **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** and let us know.

Keep up to date by checking the Nets Info page.

- We're getting more sign-ups to operate our special event calls (N#A) during our anniversary celebration October 7th through swL-34 the 13th. We're not going to repeat all the details here again. You can find them on our N3A page, but here is a list of those who have signed up so far.

N1A - W1OH
N2A - NW2K
N3A - K3WWP WY3H KC2EGL WA3HIC
N4A - AI4SV
N5A -
N6A - K6MGO
N7A -
N8A -
N9A - KR9Z
N0A - KD0V

Check the page we mentioned if you are interested in signing up or want more details. Thanks to those who have signed up already. Those in red will operate the sprint that week. We need all ten special calls active in the sprint.

- We posted this item a couple newsletters ago, and it drew a nice response, so we're repeating it once more here.

Have you checked out our picture gallery lately? Is your picture there? If not, we would like to have you join the 348+ members who do currently have their picture there. Just send us a nice facial shot where the face portion of the picture is at least 120 x 120 pixels. Anything smaller than that will probably be blurry. It can be much larger. That will work well when it is cropped and re-sized. We think pictures of members make a club that much more personalized and friendly. If you can, name the picture file as follows: pix_sm_k3wwp.jpg (Substitue your call for mine and change jpg to gif or png if the file is in that format. Please all lower case letters in the file name including the jpg, gif, png extension.) Email it as an attachment and include your call AND membership number in the body of the email. Make the subject of the email NAQCC Picture Gallery. If you follow the above procedure EXACTLY, you will have my eternal gratitude and your picture will be posted promptly. If you don't, it may take a while for your picture to be posted. Send to **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**

- Since there is not much news because of the close spacing of newsletters this time, I'd like to muse on a couple of things.

I don't understand why our NAQCC guestbook is so under-used. It's a great place to share ideas, requests for info, comments on the club, etc. On my personal web site, the guestbook is used regularly. I get probably an average of 5 or so posts per week, which isn't outstanding, but when you consider the NAQCC guestbook gets an average of maybe 1 or at the most 2 posts per month, there's a big difference. Especially when you consider the NAQCC web site gets perhaps some 10-20 percent more visitors than my site.

I also don't understand why more members don't contribute to the newsletter. I know everyone out there is literate and everyone has special knowledge on subjects relating to CW and QRP that they could share here in the newsletter. We'd love to have some feature articles like the ones that Mike KC2EGL and I contribute now and then, such as the building of the KX-1 a

couple years ago, just to give one example. We've only had a dozen or so such articles in the 120 or so issues of the newsletter since we went to a full-size on-line newsletter.

Really it seems the only club activity that gets its share of response is our sprints. We're very proud of how they have grown from just a couple dozen or so participants to an average of well over 100 for the last 24 sprints.

Our awards seem to peak in spurts for whatever reason. Some months we get well over a dozen new applications, other months we get none.

Our challenges which should be very popular for those who don't enjoy sprints or contests, have been virtually stable in participation around 5-15 participants ever since their inception while the club itself has grown from a couple hundred members to nearly 6,000 members now.

Our nets, despite shakeups the past couple years are doing fairly well, but could do better, especially since many members say they joined to get help improving their CW skills. The nets are an excellent way to do that.

Tied into the nets is our CW Assistance program. It could be much more helpful than it has been. We need more of you to help Ron K5DUZ out with that program. Despite a heavy work load that takes much time away from his Elmering skills, he has done a great job in the little time he does have to devote to it. Many of you are very skilled CW ops and could easily help out those who need help.

Club Chapters is another activity that has fallen short of expectations. Despite not always seeing much club news here in the newsletter (c'mon chapter directors and send in that news), our 4 clubs - EU, MN, TX, and WPA are doing well in providing more fellowship among members in those areas. There should be many more chapters though.

Each of the activities mentioned above are featured in the newsletters or on the web site. Each one has a contact person listed in the newsletter or on the 'Contact Us' page on the web site. Sit down and think what you can do to help the club, and contact the appropriate person. Thanks.

- Just a quick reminder we're continuing with the hidden call sign idea originally suggested by Bill KB3XS. Somewhere in this newsletter is a call sign of a member in a place that is definitely out of context and containing a mix of upper and lower case letters. If it is YOUR call sign and YOU find it, email **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** BEFORE the publication date of the next newsletter (Apr 28) and win a gift certificate for 100 NAQCC QSL cards produced by the CheapQSLs.com company run by Hal K6RF (#0171) and donated by the NAQCC thanks to your generous monetary donations to the club. Cheap refers only to the price, not the quality of the cards. They are beautiful and a great way to show your pride in being a NAQCC member. See the main page of the web site to find out how to purchase your own cards.

Because of some problems with our QTH.net mail list in announcing the release of our last newsletter as well as the short turnaround between newsletters, we're giving the 'hidden caller' in that issue some extra time (till the deadline mentioned just above) to find his or her call.

4. CHAPTER NEWS:

Here is where our club chapters present news about their chapter activities. We currently have four chapters - European, Minnesota, Texas, and Western Pennsylvania. We're looking

forward to expanding that roster. Chapters are more or less self-governing local gatherings organized by members in a geographical area and subject to a list of guidelines under the auspices of the NAQCC. If you would be interested in starting a chapter in your area, let us know and we'll send a copy of the guidelines.

NAQCC EUROPEAN CHAPTER:

pix_sm_mw3ymy (13K)

Any items in this section are from EU Chapter President Matt MW3YMY unless otherwise credited.
Questions or comments should go to **MATT@MATTIRELAND.CO.UK**
The EU Chapter web site is at http://naqcc-eu.org/

NAQCC MINNESOTA CHAPTER:

Any items in this section are from Chapter President Rich WD0K unless otherwise credited.
Questions or comments should go to pix_email_wd0k .

NAQCC TEXAS CHAPTER:

Any items in this section are from TX Chapter Director Ron K5DUZ unless otherwise credited.
Questions or comments should go to **WEBMASTER7388@NAQCCTX.COM**
The TX Chapter web site is at http://www.naqcctx.com/

NAQCC WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER:

Any items in this section are from John K3WWP unless otherwise credited.
Questions or comments should go to **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**
All chapter news can be found ONLY here in this section of the newsletter.

The WPA Chapter is again making plans to set up at the Butler Hamfest coming up the first Sunday in June. It's always nice to meet a lot of local members there, and hopefully to sign up

some new members as well. We hope to see you there this year. We'll be praying for good weather.

5. NAQCC QRS NETS:

News and net reports in this section are from QRS Net Manager Dan AF4LB unless otherwise credited.
Dan will handle all Net related material at this email address:
pix email af4lb

We need to add to our roster of nets so we can cover the whole country if possible. Some members have told us that they listen for the nets that we have now, but are unable to hear them because of the area in which they live. All of our present NCSs can testify that it is a very rewarding and enjoyable job running a net and helping others get needed actual on the air code practice. If you would like to start a net in your area, contact Dan and let him know so you can work out the details.

Please go back and read the first item in the General Club News section above about our nets if you skimmed past it the first time. It is very important.

Latest NAQCC QRS Nets schedule can be found on the NAQCC web site here.

Recent Net Activity report:

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Net Name (Abbreviation)
Date(UTC) NCS   Participants

NAQCC Main QRS Net (NQN)
3-26-12  AF4LB   -6-  AF4LB  N4JD  K1IEE  N6TLU  N4PLK  N9RLO
4-2-12   AF4LB   -7-  AF4LB  N4PLK  K1IEE  K9EYT  AC8AP  N6TLU  W4HH

NAQCC East Texas QRS Net (ETN)
3-27-12  KA5TJS  -3-  KA5TJS  KE5YGA  KE5YUM
4-3-12   KA5TJS  -5-  KA5TJS  KF4IBU  KE5YGA  KE5YUM  KG0YR

NAQCC Rocky Mtn Regional/Continental QRS net (RMR) - Tuesday
3-20-12  wc7s    -2-  wc7s  k1iee

NAQCC Rocky Mtn Regional/Continental QRS net (RMR) - Thursday
3-29-12  wc7s    -3-  wc7s  kg0yr  ke7fzz

NAQCC East Coast QRS Net (ECN)
3-30-12  AF4LB   -3-  AF4LB  K1IEE K3WWP

NAQCC Pacific NorthWest QRS Net (PNW)
3/30/12  KE7LKW  -5-  KE7LKW   K7ZNP  N6KIX  WB4SPB  K7ZI
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For more net info, see CW Assistance/QRS Nets on the web site.

6. NAQCC CW ASSISTANCE PROJECT:

Items in this section are from CW Assistance Project Coordinator Ron K5DUZ (L) unless otherwise credited.
If you are interested in helping out or need help with any CW and/or QRP matters contact:
K5DUZ - **NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET**

Ron is still involved in another work project and will be unavailable to write info for this section for a while longer. If you would like to write something that you feel will be helpful to our members in learning CW or improving CW skills, please feel free to do so.

From K3WWP: I'd like to talk about the importance of zero-beating. Not the method of doing so, but why it is so helpful and important to do so.

Obviously first of all, when you are zero-beat with someone, both of you are on the exact same frequency and only taking up one space on the band which allows for more stations to be active without interfering with each other.

Interference is a another major reason for zero-beating. I'll give what is perhaps an extreme example although it does happen and does apply to any separation between stations, not just the one in the example here. If you call CQ on 7040, and someone answers you on 7041, you may or may not hear him, depending on how far you tune around for an answer. If you do hear him and establish contact, then you may face this situation. While you are transmitting on 7040, someone hears nothing on 7041, and properly sends QRL? You may hear him if you are operating break-in (QSK) and send C or YES, but he won't hear you because he didn't tune down to 7040. The station you are working won't hear him at all because he is listening to you on 7040. The end result is that the new arrival on 7041 will assume (correctly) the frequency is vacant and go ahead and call CQ. If he gets an answer, when you turn it back to the station you are working on 7041, he will be QRMed by the new arrival. Whose fault is it? Not you, not the new arrival, but the station who answered your CQ because he didn't zero-beat you. As I re-read that, it's a bit hard to explain, but if it confused you, read it again because it shows how important zero-beating is.

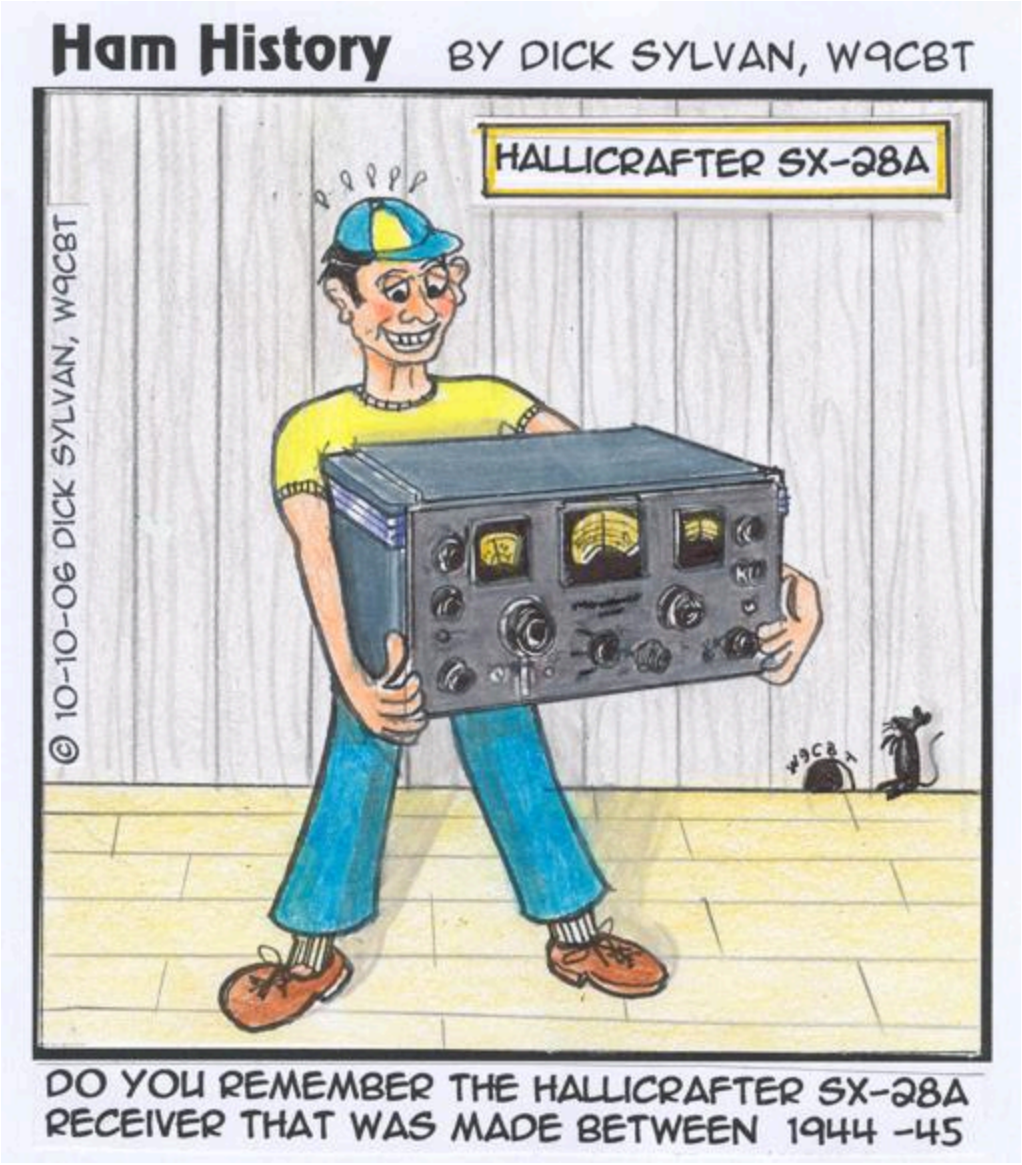
Just a couple other thoughts. Don't forget when calling CQ that many folks don't know how to zero-beat and you should use the RIT on your rig to tune up and down with it for any answers. Even so, some stations are so far off of zero-beat you may still not hear them. For this reason, if you are the one answering a CQ, you are much more likely to be heard than the one off-frequency.

Of course if you are crystal-controlled, you can't most times zero-beat a station, but if you use a VFO or VXO, you should learn exactly how to use your equipment to achieve zero-beat, and do it every time you answer someone. Well, with one exception - when a DX station is operating split-frequency, but that's another story for another time.

7. CW CARTOON OF THE MONTH:

Let's take a comedy and/or nostalgia break now courtesy of Dick Sylvan W9CBT NAQCC #2062. Dick has been a long-time QRP/CW operator. One of his many talents is being a

cartoon artist. Dick's cartoons appear monthly in the K9YA Telegraph, a free ham radio eZine, where he is staff cartoonist. The NAQCC is very honored to reprint Dick's cartoons originally published in the K9YA Telegraph. Dick has also authored a book entitled "Hi Hi - A Collection of Ham Radio Cartoons" available via his web site. A new cartoon has appeared in each of our even-numbered newsletters ever since their debut in Issue #058, November 17, 2007.


Ham History
BY DICK SYLVAN, W9CBT
HALLICRAFTER SX-28A
© 10-10-06 DICK SYLVAN, W9CBT
DO YOU REMEMBER THE HALLICRAFTER SX-28A RECEIVER THAT WAS MADE BETWEEN 1944 -45

8. MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

This section is managed by Paul N8XMS and any questions about it should go to PAUL142857@GMAIL.COM. Paul selects members at random and asks them if they would like to be featured in the Member Spotlight in the newsletter.

George Baxter KH6OZ #2290

Hello NAQCC'ers,

I am George Baxter, KH6OZ, Member #2290. I read every issue of the NAQCC News Letter. Thanks for producing a quality newsletter.

I went to code school at Ft Devens, MA 1974 for the U.S. Army. I retired 1994 as an E-8. I was first licensed as WN7DZP around 1976 time frame and tested for General in Hawaii in the early 1980s. I finally upgraded to Extra in the 2000's.

I enjoy QRP usually 5w CW from my QTH here in St. Ignatius, MT. and operate just a little SSB. Lately I've been on a JT65 kick. I use DM-780 and HF-65 programs to operate the digital modes. (Thanks go to the Hams who wrote those outstanding programs.) I enjoy giving out the state of Montana. You can find me on the K3UK SKCC and LOTW pages if I'm on the radio. I use a Brown Bros straight key on CW, and have a Bencher paddle, and a Heathkit keyer which I never use

My station is solar powered by a 130w panel on the roof of the old church we live in. The cables go down through the roof and walls into the basement shack. The system consists of a Zantrax 40amp Charge controller and 4 6V golf cart batteries for storage. A MFJ-1128 DC power panel is used to connect all the equipment to the batteries. There is also a 1000W full sine wave inverter to run 110V appliances.

My main radio is a Yaesu FT897d with AT897 Plus auto tuner attached to a 40M Windom hanging from the church steeple, with ends attached to Pine trees on either side. Other equipment for HF is an ICOM 730 which has been around the world with me. An HW-8, and HW-101.

Two computers are used in the shack. First, An old Dell for running the digital modes and

logging QSOs using my home brew logging program which looks up calls and spits out NAQCC, SKCC, Polar Bear club numbers automatically. Its not fancy, but works. The other computer running Linux is attached to various Ham sites.

I'm listed on Twitter, and play around with RufzXP High speed morse program sometimes. If you need Montana for any awards look me up and we can schedule a QSO. 73s/72s.

9. NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES BY OUR MEMBERS:

This section is a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham bands or to submit an article dealing with some aspect of CW and QRP operation or equipment. Examples might include, but not limited to, antenna projects, QRP and/or SDR equipment, tuners, battery technology, keyers, logging, or other related topic of interest to the QRP community.
Send your news items and articles to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**. Deadline for submitting news items for the next newsletter is Apr 25. For your convenience any links in this section will open in a new browser window so you can come immediately back here to the newsletter just by closing that extra window. DISCLAIMER: Any views expressed in this section are those of the member submitting them, and may or may not be those of the NAQCC or its officers.

- **From John K3WWP #0002** - Nothing really exciting has happened in this short interval between newsletters this time. I have gotten off to a quicker start on the April challenge and have over half the letters already after 5 days. I hope I won't have to go down to the wire again this month. I celebrated the 49th anniversary of being a ham on April 3. And that's really about all the 'news' I have.

- **From Bharathi VU2RBI #4349 -** Dear ham friends: I am planning to visit the United States from April 28th to May 28th. My schedule includes: Chicago, April 27; Atlanta, May 3-6; Chicago, May 6-17; Dayton Convention, May 18-20; and Chicago, May 21-27.

I would like to inform everyone that Mr. Suri, VU2MY, chairman of India's National Institute of Amateur Radio is going to receive an award at Dayton. If you are nearby Dayton or are planning to attend, please contact me. I will be in the International booth on May 18th from 3:00pm to 5:00pm. I hope to see you there. If anyone would like to meet me, please contact me via email: bharathipd@yahoo.com

Club email address - **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Past on-line newsletters beginning with issue #042 are now archived on the site. So if you missed seeing any past issues, you can check them out in the archives.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.